

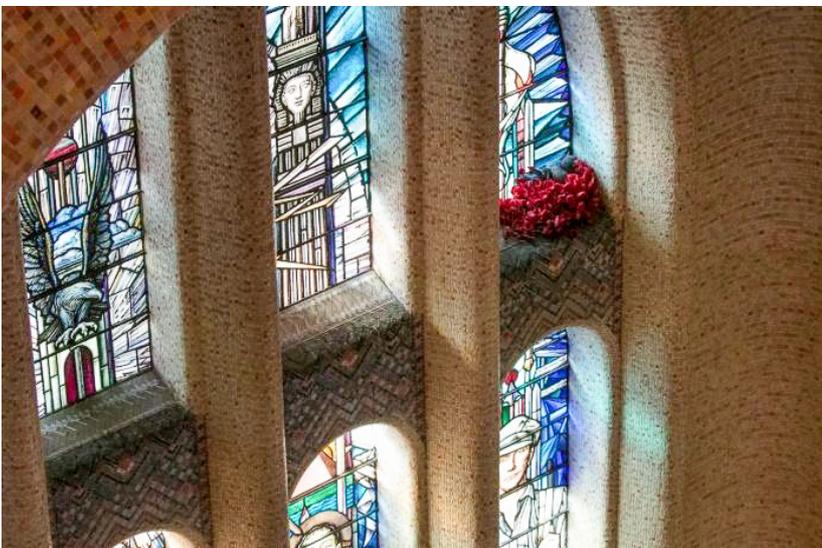
A Time to Remember

By Paul Gibbs

Is this a coincidence? Or are the pigeons relaying a message, or poignant reminder to us to say that they too should not be forgotten. As many fanciers may be aware through reading newspaper reports of watching the TV evening news that two pigeons have taken up residence in the “Hall of Remembrance” at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, building their nest on a window ledge against a stained glass window depicting a wounded soldier, that symbolises the defining quality of “endurance”. As a spokesperson for the war memorial said, “A reminder of the powerful bond between man and beast on the battlefield”.



Their nest was not made from the usual nesting material of twigs and leaves, but from artificial Poppies taken from the “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier”, solving the dilemma for memorial staff as to where the Poppies were disappearing to.



Strangely enough, this wonderful story unfolded on the 7/11/19 just days prior to Remembrance Day (11/11/19). Dr Meleah Hampton a historian at the AWM said, “That while pigeons are unloved in some quarters, they have been used in both world wars and in civilian life for centuries”. Going on to say, “Whenever we talk about animals in war, they are fulfilling a purpose or performing a task that people can’t do easily on their own”.



When I heard and read the story myself, and saw these wonderful photos I couldn’t help but feel a little bit proud and sentimental of these two pigeons, and would like to think that it wasn’t just a coincidence.



Here in this sacred place, these two pigeons were preparing for a new life, in a place that commemorates death, sacrifice and renewal.

The pigeon is a symbol of war and peace, having played a vital role throughout both world wars, a role that today’s society, both young and old should not forget.

I hope readers like the photos as much as I do, and relay the story to family and friends whenever discussing the virtues of keeping racing pigeons.

In closing I would like to acknowledge and thank the Australian War Memorial for extending the courtesy for us to reproduce the attached photos that accompany this article and to Miriam Fisher of the Western Australian newspaper for using some of her wonderfully written text.